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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4634  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0271  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0130  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000525

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR-COLLINS AND EAP/CM AND TC  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [ETRD](#) [CH](#) [TX](#) [ST](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: (C) ST. LUCIA: TAIWAN DECISION MAY WEAKEN COMPTON

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 488

- [1](#)B. BRIDGETOWN 464
- [1](#)C. BRIDGETOWN 104
- [1](#)D. BRIDGETOWN 49

Classified By: DCM Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Rufus Bousquet has emerged as the head of a rival faction set on forcing Prime Minister Sir John Compton to retire from politics and leave FM Bousquet in charge. If Compton's departure is the outcome of current infighting in the five-month-old government, suspected money launderer Richard Fredrick will likely be elevated to the Deputy Prime Minister position. A split among cabinet members over the decision to diplomatically recognize Taiwan over China is the current catalyst for this unexpected development. END SUMMARY.

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MOVING BEHIND COMPTON'S BACK  
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[1](#)2. (C) On April 30, St. Lucia's Foreign Minister Rufus Bousquet joined Taiwan's Foreign Minister James C.F. Huang in signing a joint communique reestablishing diplomatic relations between St. Lucia and Taiwan. However, this ceremony took place without Prime Minister Sir John Compton's permission. Reliable sources have informed PolOff that the Taiwan decision signifies the first great split in the recently elected United Workers Party (UWP) administration.

[1](#)3. (C) According to Victor Marquis, editor of the Voice, a former UWP campaign manager, public relations officer and close friend to FM Bousquet, PM Compton was negotiating a new financial agreement to stay with China while FM Bousquet negotiated reestablishing ties with Taiwan. In exchange for diplomatic relations, Taiwan reportedly promised Bousquet an ECD 300 million (USD 120 million) support package, including "personal assistance" to each elected representative.

[1](#)4. (C) Marquis described PM Compton's plan to announce in an April 30 televised address that St. Lucia would stay with China and that FM Bousquet was fired. It is unclear if Compton made his decision to continue relations with China before or after Bousquet's April 24 announcement that St. Lucia would diplomatically recognize Taiwan.

[1](#)5. (C) Trumping PM Compton's planned address, FM Bousquet called a press conference for the morning of April 30 and

signed the communiquQ with Taiwan without PM Compton's approval. Bousquet did, however, gain the documented support of seven of the UWP members of parliament (MPs) before taking this action. Bousquet then faced PM Compton in a cabinet meeting with the backing of his seven colleagues, leaving only Stephenson King and Lenard Montoute siding with PM Compton. Bousquet allegedly confronted Compton in this meeting, telling the PM it was time for him to go.

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THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM  
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¶6. (C) Compton left for the United States on May 1, his birthday, for health reasons. He will return on May 5. Bousquet departed for the United States on May 3 to meet with private investors and is expected to return on May 7. Compton tasked Bousquet to attend the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Tenth Meeting of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) in Belize, for which he will depart May 8 or 9 and return May 12. Unless these plans shift, Compton will have time upon his return to counter-maneuver against Bousquet in the latter's absence from St. Lucia.

¶7. (C) Marquis revealed that Bousquet has a possible plan to buy off Compton using money from the Taiwan package. This plan involves Compton taking an extended leave for health reasons and then finally retiring, leaving Bousquet as prime minister. If Bousquet is successful, Minister of Housing Richard Fredrick, suspected money launderer and supporter of narcotraffickers, may well be appointed deputy prime minister.

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WORD GETTING OUT  
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¶8. (C) Philip J. Pierre, deputy political leader of the opposition St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP), made a more cautious assessment of the political turmoil. Pierre agreed that the Taiwan decision signaled the first split in the current administration. He observed that Compton, King, and Montoute were not at the Taiwan communiquQ signing, but that all the other MPs attended. Pierre also foresaw "interesting times ahead" as a result of the instability now surfacing. However, Pierre predicted that the UWP will eventually resolve the current row, although the party may split again over future issues.

¶9. (C) In response to allegations in the press that the Taiwan issue has caused a split in St. Lucia's cabinet, Acting Prime Minister Stephenson King is scheduled to make a statement on May 4 to quell these rumors. According to Commerce Minister Guy Mayers, the rumors are completely false and the cabinet is unified behind the decision to renew ties with Taiwan. As far as post knows, the PRC mission has not budged from St. Lucia, nor has had any official communication with the St. Lucian Foreign Ministry, since the April 30 press conference. It is possible that the mission is waiting for a resolution of the tug-of-war within the ruling party.

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COMMENT  
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¶10. (C) To date, PM Sir John Compton has been the dominant politician in St. Lucia's short history, having served as Prime Minister for 15 of St. Lucia's 28 years of independence. If anyone can survive an internal putsch, it is probably Compton. However, his advanced age and the contempt in which the majority of cabinet members hold Compton's most trusted confidant, Senator Ausbert d'Auvergne (ref B), are working against him. If Bousquet successfully usurps power, he will likely be seen as a savvy operator. He remains, however, an inexperienced leader with a questionable past (ref C). The greater concern, however, would be newcomer Fredrick's predicted rise to be deputy prime minister. His ties to money laundering and narcotraffickers

are a natural concern for post (ref D). Even if Bousquet's maneuvering is unsuccessful, his ability to inspire a majority of the ruling party MPs to stand against PM Compton illustrates a significant erosion in the power of a man accustomed to ruling single-handedly.

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